



Quick Reads

Thomas Newton, MPP, REHS
Director, Iowa Department of Public Health

May 29, 2008

Iowa top overall in children's health care

According to a new report by the Commonwealth Fund, Iowa ranks top in the nation overall in health care for children, as well as children's access to care, family insurance premiums, equity, and the potential to lead long healthy, productive lives. The report, [U.S. Variations In Child Health System Performance: A State Scorecard](#), ranked states on 13 indicators for children grouped in categories that include access, quality, costs, equity, and healthy outcomes. While ranking first in the nation overall, Iowa was second in the access and quality categories. The report includes an [interactive map](#) and is available at www.commonwealthfund.org/publications.

Health Care Reform Act update

Through the [Health Care Reform Act](#), the legislature took a giant step forward this year for public health. The Act not only aims to reduce the number of children without health insurance, but it also moves us in the direction of setting up state initiatives for prevention and chronic disease management, and ensuring access to medical homes. I look forward to seeing new partnerships develop around these and other initiatives in the Act and will keep you updated. Right now I can tell you that the department is working to appoint members to the seven newly created advisory councils and committees. For a summary of the Health Care Reform act, visit www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/legislative_updates.asp.

Community Wellness Grants available

An important component of the Health Care Reform Act is the Iowa Healthy Communities Initiative grant program. I am happy to say that IDPH has posted a

[Request for Proposals](#) to fund local initiatives that encourage healthier lifestyles, promote wellness and prevent the health and financial consequences of chronic disease that are often lifestyle related. IDPH anticipates awarding at least 35 community wellness grants. For more information, visit the Grants, Bids and Proposals page on the IDPH Web site at www.idph.state.ia.us/apl/notice_of_funds.asp. Applications are due June 19.

Local Board of Health Toolkit now available

A great resource for anyone wanting to know more about local boards of health is now available through the [Upper Midwest Public Health Training Center](#) (UMPHTC) Web site. Designed for newly appointed board of health members, county supervisors, local public health agency administrators, and even veteran board of health members, the new [Local Board of Health Toolkit](#) is available at www.public-health.uiowa.edu/umphtc/education/boh. Here you will find a variety of tools included to facilitate a better understanding of the role and responsibility of the local board of health in supporting the mission of public health. Thanks to IDPH Regional Community Health Consultant, Laurie Page for compiling these valuable resources over the last two years and to UMPHTC for creating such a user-friendly and organized Web site.

Antibiotic resistance Web page gets a facelift

If you haven't already done so, check out the newly redesigned IDPH [Antibiotic Resistance Web page](#). The enhanced site's many resources are now organized into an intuitive interface for the public, school athletics departments, health care professionals, and other partners. The public can use the site to learn about proper antibiotic use and the dangers of antibiotic resistance. Coaches, trainers and school nurses will appreciate a Frequently Asked Questions document about methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), as well as resources for creating a school policy to help prevent the spread of MRSA. Health care providers can use the site to obtain useful tools such as a treatment flow chart for patients with MRSA, as well as information about the Iowa Antibiotic Resistance Task Force. To learn more about the importance of antibiotic resistance as a public health issue and to view the resources, visit www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/antibiotic_resistance.asp.

Hardin Library launches "Iowa Go Local"

The University of Iowa [Hardin Library for the Health Sciences](#) has launched a service to connect Iowans with health care providers across the state, empower them with quality information about their health, and help them access services including hospitals, nursing homes, pharmacies and assisted living facilities. With funding from the National Library of Medicine, [Iowa Go Local](#) is available through MedlinePlus, a Web site that offers free, high quality health information in English and Spanish.

Partners in the project include the [University of Iowa College of Public Health](#) and the [University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics Patients' Library](#).

Iowa Go Local is being promoted through exhibits and training sessions at county fairs, public libraries, professional conferences and at the Iowa State Fair on August 11. Visit Iowa Go Local at <http://medlineplus.gov/iowa>. To host a presentation in your area, contact lib-hardin@uiowa.edu.

1996-2006 "BEARFACTS" available from State Data Center

Personal income is one of the most powerful social determinants of health status. The State Data Center of Iowa has recently collected and posted Bureau of Economic Analysis Regional Fact Sheets (BEARFACTS), 1996 to 2006 to their Web site. Each county-by-county fact sheet includes: per capita personal income and ranking among Iowa's 99 counties; comparisons to the state and national averages; changes since 2005 and 1996; average growth rates since 1996; and growth rate comparisons to state and national averages. As you consider which factors affect the overall health of your community, I encourage you to refer to these data sets and others from the State Data Center of Iowa. To access the BEARFACTS, visit <http://data.iowadatacenter.org/browse/cobearfacts2006.html>. To access other data from the State Data Center, visit www.iowadatacenter.org and click on the Data tab at the top of the page.

Grant seekers: mark your calendar!

The [2008 Iowa Grant Symposium](#) will be held Sept. 3 & 4 at Iowa State University. Themed "Iowans Partnering for Progress," the Symposium will feature workshops, formal and informal networking opportunities, and a full day of grant management topics offered by the U.S. Department of Labor. This year, planners expect the event to be attended by at least 500 participants from more than 100 Iowa communities. Registration opens July 15. For more information, visit www.iagems.gov.

Campus Safety Forum, June 5

Iowa's first [Campus Safety Forum](#) will be held June 5 at Simpson College in Indianola. This one-day event is designed to help faculty, policy makers, responders and other partners prepare for an event such as the one witnessed in April 2007 at Virginia Tech. The keynote speaker is Dr. Gordon Davies, who was part of Virginia Gov. Timothy Kaine's panel which investigated last year's tragic event. Registration is \$35. For an agenda or to register, visit www.iowahomelandsecurity.org and click on Campus Safety Forum or call (515) 725-3231.

We want your best practices

IDPH is committed to telling the citizens of Iowa about the good things public health is doing to make a difference. To do this, we want to highlight your best practices/success stories. Please send your ideas to Don McCormick at dmccormi@idph.state.ia.us.

To everyone in public health and all our partners—keep up the great work!
Tom